

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLIC WORK SESSION

AUGUST 14, 2013

WILLIAM A. BRIGGS BUILDING (REED CONFERENCE ROOM)

845 PARK AVENUE, CRANSTON, RI

EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:00 P.M.

**PUBLIC WORKSESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

**PUBLIC SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PUBLIC WORK
SESSION**

MINUTES

The Public Work Session of the Cranston School Committee was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on the evening of the above date at the William A. Briggs Building (Reed Conference Room) with the following members present: Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Traficante, Mrs. Ruggieri, Mr. Gale, Mr. Colford, and Mr. Traficante. Attorney Cascione was also present. Please note that Mrs. McFarland was absent with cause; she had to travel out of State to give a presentation in Dover, NH for New England Community Action.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. It was moved by Mrs. Culhane and seconded by Mr. Gale and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws -

PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel: (Renewal of Contracts -

**Administrators/Principals); (Perspective Administrator Contracts);
(Non-Certified Supervisory-Confidential Employees)**

**PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation: (Contract
Negotiations' Update – Secretaries); (Teachers); (Teacher
Assistants); (Bus Drivers, Mechanics); (Tradespeople)**

PL 42-46-5 (a)(8) Student Hearing - (Hearing on Student A/Retention)

**Call to Order – Public Session was called to order at 8:48 p.m. The
roll was called. A quorum was present. It was reported that no votes
were taken in Executive Session.**

**It was also noted, for the record, that Mrs. McFarland is traveling out
of state for work and is unable to attend this evening's meeting.**

**Decision on Middle School Student (A) Retention Hearing – A motion
was made by Mrs. Culhane, seconded by Mrs. Ruggieri, to uphold the
recommendation of the Superintendent. The roll was called:**

Mr. Traficante Yes Mr. Colford Yes

Mrs. Ruggieri Yes Mrs. Culhane Yes

Mr. Gale Yes Ms. Iannazzi Yes

Mrs. McFarland Absent w/cause

Public Work Session

a. Substitute Rates – Mr. Votto passed out a sheet with the current substitute rates that the district has in place. Mr. Stycos had released a resolution 4/5 years ago to reduce our teacher sub rates for our employees by approximately 5%. (See attached) Time has passed where we have now pushed ourselves out of the market. As you can see by the agendas we add subs on all the time every year; however, they just throw their name on there to have the opportunity to sub with us but usually they never sub because they get a better deal somewhere else. The average across the state right now is around \$90.00 per day. Mr. Votto explained where other districts are at right now. Back 4/5 years ago when we did this we were at \$70.00; we were then at \$90.00 and then we were at \$100. We were also at \$9.00 for all the other non-certified groups except bus drivers. We raised our rate for bus drivers because we were having difficulty getting sub bus drivers. Mr. Balducci also gave Mr. Votto statistics on the surplus the school department ran this past year in our sub account. This was explained by Mr. Votto – sub teachers. A question and answer period was developed. He also spoke about the strain this issue has on our Teacher Assistant needs.

Mr. Votto noted that he believes that our sub rate for the district for teachers should go to \$80. Then from that point on each one should be an increment of \$10 above that, i.e. \$80, \$90, then \$100. Mr. Votto

also explained the long-term sub and the work that they do. He would like to see the non-certified go at least \$.25 more.

Dr. Lundsten noted that she has spoke to several retired teachers from the community she lives in and they start at \$75 and their next jump is \$100.

Mrs. Ruggieri noted that when looking at the non-certified like the Teacher Assistants and all the issues that they are dealing with; she looks at that position and what it involves we might need to look at that one a little differently. There is a lot more involved. It's a demanding position.

Mrs. Culhane asked for the average per diem rate for a regular teacher. The answer was \$525 per day for top step teacher. A discussion ensued.

Mrs. Culhane asked how other districts that pay better than we do faring as far as getting substitutes. Mr. Votto thinks that obviously if they're going to go somewhere they are going to go for the more money. It's very competitive. It was also noted that Providence pays their long-term sub on step. They could come in as 2, 3, step teachers. They don't get benefits however; but they do get around 40-50,000 per year depending where they are working just to be a sub. Mr. Colford asked if Mr. Votto could explain the 1-30 days. This was explained to him.

Ms. Iannazzi asked if anyone would have a problem with what Mr. Votto is suggesting, for the next School Committee meeting. That would be \$80 - \$90 - \$100 and then It was suggested that the non-certified be added to also. Mr. Votto gave the members a list of other districts and what they pay their sub TA's. So it was decided that Teacher Assistants would be \$10; Custodians and Secretaries would be \$9 and Bus Drivers would be \$11. Mr. Votto noted that he will have a resolution for Monday evening's meeting ready.

Permit Policy

Ms. Iannazzi noted that the committee had said that they would re-group to look at some of the numbers after the permit policy was in effect. She asked if Mrs. Nota-Masse or Mr. Dillon had any numbers to share with the committee at this time.

It was noted that we thought that the committee more or less wanted to discuss the Permit Policy itself; which is what Mr. Traficante noted too. Ms. Iannazzi noted that we will discuss the changes that Mr. Colford and Mr. Traficante are suggesting tonight and then bring up the numbers at the September Work Session. Mr. Traficante wants to be assured it will be on the docket because he and Mr. Colford want to make some amendments. A discussion ensued in regards to the permits that have already been approved or denied at this time. Mrs.

Nota-Masse gave some of the numbers that we had and the appeal process we had to go through.

Mrs. Nota-Masse reported that any new permit request had to fall under the new criteria and quite honestly, not many of them did. Those were people who very generally moved and request that their children stay at the school they were in. Or they were just brand new to school, i.e. kindergarten or first grade and parents didn't want them to go to school X for this reason. Mrs. Nota-Masse reported that in regards to the secondary schools; they don't have the same issues as the elementary schools. A lot of them were for programming requests. We have worked very diligently with families trying to work things out even if they weren't given a permit. We had 11 appeals the other night and folks showed up except for one family.

Mr. Traficante stated that it was indicated to him at the last School Committee meeting that we would come back in August and discuss the policy. It was noted that it was numbers that they were going to discuss. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the issue with tonight's topics. Mr. Traficante noted that when that policy was embargoed, for what reason he didn't know, we should have had a work session on it first. It was presented to us that night and we had to try to absorb it that night and try to understand it; try to understand the ramifications of it; and then trying to make amendments to it; it caused a lot of frustration and confusion. Not only on part of the committee but on the parents also. When we sat

down we did not try to alter in any way, shape or form; in fact we kept the majority of Policy indicators as far as the new permits. We didn't want to touch that because we knew you were working on it at that time.

Ms. Iannazzi stated – The policy wasn't embargoed. There's an Open Meetings Law. Mr. Traficante stated – I was told the word was embargoed. Ms. Iannazzi – Just to clarify, there's an Open Meetings Law and the Open Meetings Law says, "That a quorum of a School Committee; for a quorum of any elected body can't work on a document together". Mr. Traficante noted that he did understand that. He is not arguing that point. His point is that once a policy was developed by the sub-committee it should have come to a Work Shop first and then to the full committee. Ms. Iannazzi noted that this was tried. A lengthy discussion ensued. Ms. Iannazzi also asked, respectfully, that they hold off for these amendments; for one reason which is that we already have one parent who has appealed to RIDE. If we now make changes effective this school year, we're jeopardizing the RIDE hearing.

Mr. Traficante stated – You made it very clear to me that we were going to discuss it during the August meeting. I wasn't the only one that understood it that way.

Mrs. Ruggieri stated – Just to be clear, when we originally looked at the policy and we were given feedback then we worked, Jeannine and

I, for several hours and we were actually working up until the night of that meeting to make sure that we....we went back and forth with different things that we could add. In a better world, we would have had a second opportunity to look at it in a work session and go through it so that maybe people weren't as

A lengthy discussion ensued in regards to the changes they want to make; the time they had; what they want to discuss at the next meeting.

Mrs. Culhane: I would like to make a couple of points. The first is did anybody, that night of that meeting, make a recommendation to table the resolution? This question was answered "No". If there were concerns that night that we needed to take this and have more discussions. If there were concerns that night that we needed to table this and have more discussion then somebody should have made an offer to table.

The second point is, my understanding is thatAt this time, a lengthy discussion ensued.

Ms. Iannazzi asked Mr. Traficante to meet with our attorney and go over the amendments they want to make to the Permit Policy to see if the amendments jeopardize any of the pending cases at RIDE.

(Note: tape on file for review)

Mrs. Ruggieri suggested that if they are adding any new amendments

to the policy, that those amendments start for the next school year.

Strategic Planning – Dr. Judith Lundsten

(Please see the attached Strategic Plan) Also on file in the Superintendent's Office

Superintendent Lundsten made a 45 minute presentation on the attached Strategic Plan draft. She noted that she has sought out feedback from the community, from principals, teachers, etc. She e-mailed everybody who attended every focus group that she did last fall and asked them for feedback. She also put it on the website. Any changes made are seen in red.

Dr. Lundsten stated – This is an action plan; it is not an implementation plan. She received mostly positive feedback on this. At this time, Dr. Lundsten reviewed the strategic plan.

Dr. Lundsten noted that she has run this by the Executive Committee and now she is asking if there is any feedback from the School Committee.

Dr. Lundsten also reviewed the sheet marked “CPS-Learners for Life”. (On file also)

Adjourn Public Work Session to Public Meeting – It was reported out by Chairperson Iannazzi that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

Executive Session Minutes Sealed – August 14, 2013 – A motion was made by Mr. Gale and seconded by Mr. Traficante. All were in favor. (Mrs. McFarland was absent with cause)

Adjournment

Moved by Mrs. Culhane and seconded by Mr. Gale to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Paula McFarland

Clerk